

ITALO TAVOLATO

# LUBBERS

WITH 33 REPRODUCTIONS IN PHOTOTYPE



"VALORI PLASTICI,, PUBLISHERS - ROME

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ITALO TAVOLATO

# ADRIAAN LUBBERS

WITH 33 REPRODUCTIONS IN PHOTOTYPE

THE HILLA VON REINY FOUNDATION  
71 HOSPENESS DRIVE  
GREENS FARMS, CONNECTICUT 06436

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A critical examination of the pictorial work of Adriaan Lubbers affords us a means of cöperating in expounding one of the most important problems in modern art: that relative to the plastic interpretation of space. It is not that Lubbers confines himself to the constructive side, but in his best pictures and drawings tectonic questions refering to figured art are faced with patent clearness, and in such a way as to allow a possibility of definition. In Lubbers, as in all modern painters drawn towards substantial expression the *trompe-l'oeil* (deception) and aerial perspective are abolished, and this because the prospective in its quality of accustomedness does not even glance the idea and the being. With some modern artists indeed, we can see the inversion of the laws of perspective and the application in a contrary sense of technical means. The taboo of the perpendicular is no longer respected. The line escapes from the tridimensional prison, and breaks forth freely. The visual is overthrown. The planes are subverted. The horizontal on which it was so convenient to base one's aesthetic complacency takes an



unsuspected curve, and becomes dangerously oblique. The perspective runs off towards the background, which in turn advances willfully. The walls, the houses, the planes converge and diverge diagonally in such a way as to cause doubts as to the substantiality of the static, and the poor stupid friend of the fine arts finding himself before such a picture, wonders where he really is, feels himself pushed from one side or whirled into the figuration itself, and in fact does not succeed in registering his critical impressions at all.

These inversions and traspositions of perspective — only in appearance arbitrary — in that they disavow an empyric habit — constitute in reality an essential character of modern art: its virginal chastity armed against conceptual contacts, that is to say intellectual vulgarity. While official picturedom is always at bottom open to the aesthetic concupiscences of the first-comer, while it easily induces the atmosphere of the theatre or the brothel, modern art in its documentary manifestations shuts itself in a reserve in which the clinical eye cannot penetrate, since only the soul which has had preparation may approach. The forms and colours of this art live in mystic closure and intimacy; no more in the tridimensional vacuum of physis space. While bourgeois art seeks its system in the claptrap of the three dimensions, so as to communicate itself to the eye like any other object, the art of the modern *élite*, overcoming the merely physiological impressions, works on the conscience.

Lubbers works by such criteria and by such a system, especially in his recent Positano production. The severity of his intentions would seem sometimes



to break forth in Gothic crudities, were it not for the presence of an element of jocund and infantile ingenuousness which takes delight, as with the primitives, in an accurate portraying of detail. On other occasions, the fixity of the compositions is interrupted by a soft flow of lines on the superimposed perspectives or by vague fusion of lights in the hinted at sky. The deep streets, filled with towering architecture, the roofs, the terraces the cupolas smoothly running down the declivities of the mountains, the complex low reliefs in solid substances give special spatial developments which create the mystery of the nearness, and the nostalgia of distance. Vivid melodious petrifications stretching towards the skies overcome the allurements of the abyss, while art's charm in the magic circle of its evocation spreads joy and assuages the passions.

Just as is the case with the forms, so the colours of Lubbers are chaste anti-rhetorical in accordance with his talent. One might say indeed that he imposes on himself a voluntary renunciation, a self-limitation reduced to fundamental types of forms and tints. But he proves himself complex and brilliant in colours, which instead of being fully expressed are hinted at in tenuous shades and cautious trials. All his pictorial intuitions are born and proceed from a grey which in itself potentially contains alternate enunciative possibilities. In fact, this honest primitive grey, full-bodied and genuine, full of pearly and silvery lights flashing with ironish tints and opalescent gleams predominates in the representation even when the passional character of the whole would tend towards a strong symbolic colouring. As often as not, this grey tends towards a

rose colour which is diaphanous and lit like a primordial dawn or the flower of the amyrrilis.

Lubbers' portraits are well put together and concrete, that is to say polarly opposed, according to the stylistic interpretation of the thematic decompositions and the conceptual abstraction of certain ultra-modern schools. The psychological material seeks to respond to the plastic impulse of the artist and the elemental characters, studied with love, impress their entity on the work. Far from only reproducing aspects and appearances, attitudes and moods, as do the famous portrait painters of the ordinary schools, the genuine artist tends to represent the intrinsic unity, the living totality, the substance of the soul in its intimate relations. The lyric immediacy of the vision gives in portraits so made a breath of real life and the atmosphere turns to a whisper of nature. Over and beyond the pose, every physionomy is made up of inner relations from the integral and disinterested acceptance of the peculiar type. Subtracted from the dilemmas of induction and psychological deduction, the modern portrait does not disintegrate the characteristics of the model. The heart of the image palpitates and glows, and the mystic meanings of the organic phenomenon are intended to hold shaped life.

Adriaan Lubbers' work is robust in its form and in its lyric links. In his drawings too the expressive possibilities of line, when not harassed by exterior contingencies, bend themselves to inner orderings seen with taste and fineness. From time to time, the technique is placed in functional dependence with the organism of lyric intuitions expressed by the argument.

Lively though always remains the artist's interest in the living world, full of objectivity. Rhythm and style lend something that is always extremely personal to the production. Nevertheless, the autonomy of the pictured subject remains intact. Never is it deformed for constructive caprices, but always enveloped finely in the whole. Everything that belongs to nature is respected in the composition, as a formal element of an animated cosmos. In the best graphic portraits the style directed by interior necessities, flows towards destiny. A style that is not at all idyllic but rather tragic, and therefore particularly susceptible to beauty, and above all a vehicle of nobility and comprehension. Drawing like painting is a higher form of knowledge.

The art of this young man is spontaneous and loquacious. Numbering and measuring activity is not included among his methods, nor does the production draw sustenance from the abused and often sterile technical formulae of Simultaneity, Parallelism Equilibrium, masses, delimitations, functional relations, mechanical localizations. It is the live matters which are anxious to predominate, and this outside of all analysis, trial or experiment, since art must be understood in its quality as a superior organism of original creation, of destiny fatality and mission, and in no way as system, technical elaboration, or bit of laboratory work.

Lubbers' tectonic complexes participate of the nature of the crystal. Like mystic *druse* his urban designs expand, expressing their depth between deep golden shadows and tawny lights. Everywhere is to be



noted the accentuated preponderance of the aesthetic leaning towards a town configuration. There is despite classicism, a current of sympathy towards the modern metropolitan surroundings. In such cases, the slackening of the historical grip and the weakening of tradition allows a movement towards the New World. The centre of attraction is New York. The modern social city, absorbed in a technical orbit seems irrevocably destined to American pragmatism, finding expression right up to its extreme consequences in the formidable metropolitan character of New York. It results then that a portion of European art, being afraid of the isolation of lived life and the exclusion from today's historical events, tends to remodel itself on the standardized types from America in order to contribute its part to the establishment of a new style of life.

Lubbers' art, though backed up by ideas which form part of civilized European culture and system is fatally heading towards the urbanism of America. The especial aesthetic shape resulting from masses and quantities organized on the basis of impellent necessities gives the tone to the metropolitan constructive complexes while recording other artistic manifestations. Practical simplification establishes the terms of a logical originality, which is sometimes moving, and overcomes ornament to the advantage of the real fact. Lubbers looks for the origin of beauty among the constructional assertions proper to great modern cities. His point of departure was New York, and New York will be his point of arrival. He loves the city and his art derives from this love. Although the customs and manner of modern metropolitan life are realistic,

its content, transmuted by art, can assume mystic lineaments. Wherever necessity imposes, — necessity which like liberty leans ideally towards the metaphysic... the anti-nature of human systems and constructions has a mysterious way of reentering into the field of the natural; and the lyrical result is superior to the intentions.

It was the dynamic force of necessity which impelled Adriaan Lubbers along the path of art. In a particularly lively period of his life he found himself separated suddenly from Holland, his native country and flung into New York, where it was his fate to have to accept as welcome even the humblest jobs. Thus at different times, he was workman in factories, a carpenter, a hawker of herrings and again of musical instruments, a mechanic singer in the little low cafés in the port of Hoboken and at last chauffeur. In the course of his Proteian occupations, he had the opportunity of experimenting fully and with plethoric exuberance all New York's phases of life, from the most famous to the least known. He relished the rich variety and drew from the experience nourishment for his imagination, until the day came when he remembered he was an artist. Then he turned from the driver's wheel to the brush. He came to Europe to restore his spirit at the ancient springs and to prepare with love and study the hour of his return.

Let us wish the young artist that the return to New York be for him the return to success.





Finnwald





The church of SS. Joseph



Lam





Road to Positano



Regenhütte



Portrait of the surgeon





Beer - seller



Evergreen





Marina grande at Capri



The solitary



Regen Church





Don Beppe Rispoli



Road to Positano



Peasants





“Li Parlati,,





Port of Pozzuoli

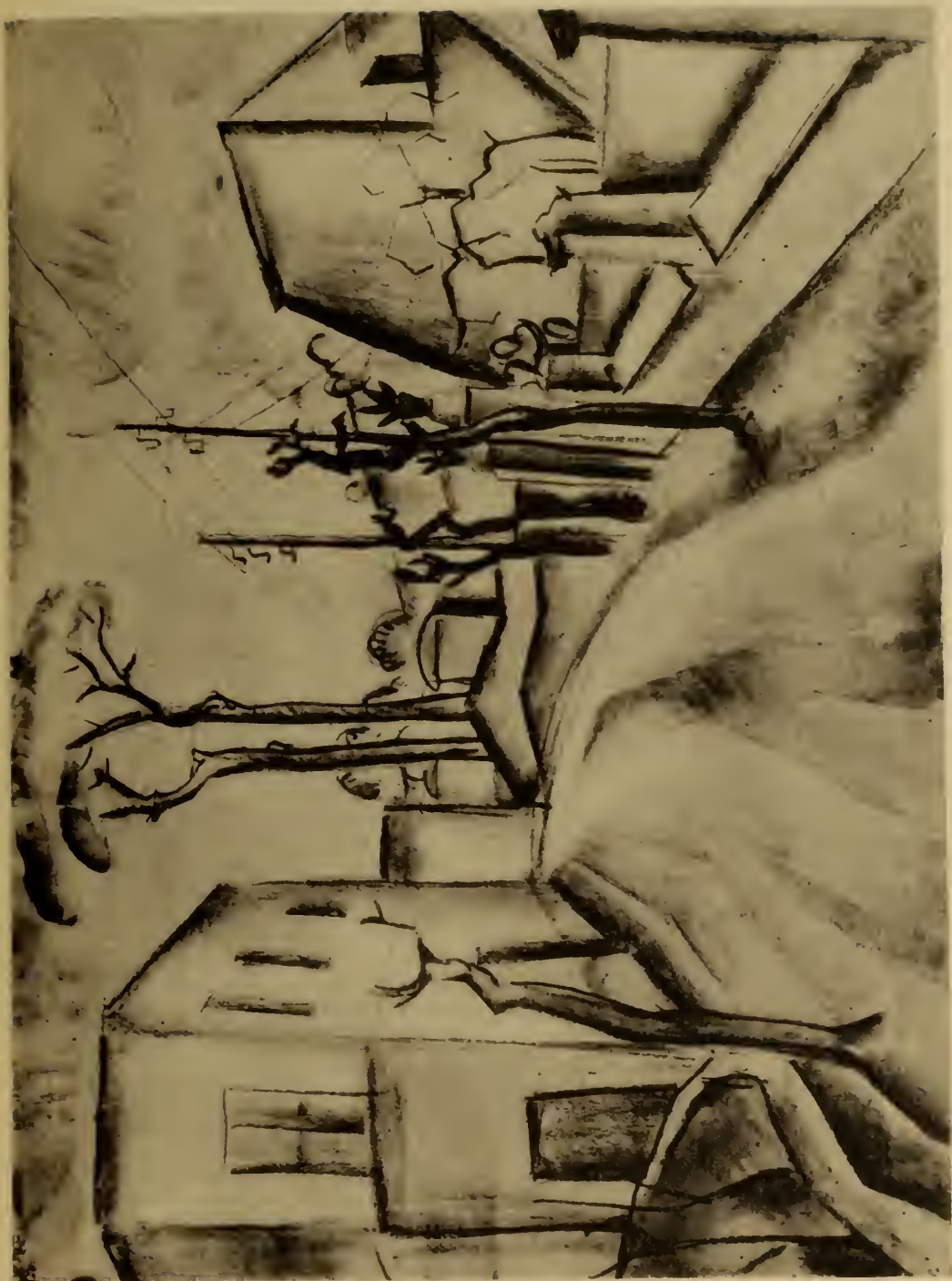


Löhberg





Landscape



Anacapri





“ La Montancia ,”



Chiesa Nuova





Landscape





The Valley of the mill



Camelia



Still Life





House at Lido





Positano



Rossloch



The mill





Sunday walk





The vood cutter's kitchen



The haunted house







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Tavolato, Italo  
ADRIAAN LUBBERS. Rome, "Valori  
Plastici", c1925.

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Tavolato, Italo

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